



STATEMENT OF FARE (Food Allergy Research and Education)

Position: **SUPPORTS HB 1035, Places of public accommodation; possession and administration of epinephrine**

Dear Chair Sickles, Vice Chair Tran, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the more than 878,000 Virginia residents with potentially life-threatening food allergies, including the more than 140,000 children 18 and under, [FARE](#) (Food Allergy Research and Education), based in McLean, the nation's leading non-profit engaged in food allergy advocacy as well as the largest private funder of food allergy research, strongly supports Delegate Bennett-Parker's legislation [HB 1035, Places of public accommodation; possession and administration of epinephrine](#).

As of July 2022, Virginia's food allergy population was estimated at **878,090** which is bigger than the combined populations of [Newport News, Richmond, and Virginia Beach](#).

Furthermore, life-threatening food allergies are on the rise as the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) found that over the past 20 years, the rates of children with food allergies has increased by more than 50% and for [children with a peanut or tree nut allergy, it has tripled](#). Life-threatening food allergies and the risk of fatal [anaphylaxis](#) are growing at an even faster rate among [Black and Asian-American children](#). Finally, the [CDC](#) also found that 8% of all children have food allergies which is the equivalent of two children in every classroom.

As you may know, there are no cures for individuals with life-threatening food allergies and the only way to stop an anaphylactic attack is through the quick administration of an epinephrine auto-injector. When an anaphylactic attack happens, time is of the essence, meaning there is often not time to wait for an ambulance to arrive.

Furthermore, [once or every ten seconds or roughly 3.4 million times a year](#), a food allergy reaction sends someone to the hospital or emergency room.

Delegate Bennett-Parker's bill is a common-sense, no-cost solution to ensure that Virginia's sizable food allergy population is safe in all public places including those outdoors. Current law defines the use of a public place as an indoor area used by the general public like a movie theater. Under HB 1035, this definition would be expanded to include outdoors and would help protect the food allergic community and those allergic to bee stings who visit one of Virginia's 42 state parks. The bill also continues to shield those acting at times of an emergency from any liability.

We believe that [HB 1035](#) is a common-sense, logical extension of the state law already in effect by allowing the use of epinephrine auto-injectors in all public places and encourage the Health and Human Services Committee to support it.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason".

Jason Linde
Senior Vice President, Advocacy
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